
NEWS From:

Congressman Mike Honda

FIFTEENTH DISTRICT - CALIFORNIA



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**Reps. Horn, Honda Hold Field Hearing in SF to Assess Bay Area,
CA Readiness for Biological, Chemical or Nuclear Attack**

Bipartisan federal panel to examine need for expanded federal support for state, local agencies

San Francisco, CA—Today, Government Efficiency Financial Management and Intergovernmental Relations Subcommittee Chairman, U.S. Congressman Steve Horn (R-CA) and Congressman Mike Honda (D-San Jose) held a field hearing to assess the role the federal government is playing in helping state and local agencies in the Bay Area to prepare for biological, chemical or nuclear attacks. After hearing testimony from federal, state and officials who work on the front lines of homeland defense, Horn and Honda questioned witnesses to determine whether the federal government is meeting the needs of law enforcement officers, firefighters, rescue teams, public health agencies and other “first responders” to terrorist attacks.

“We want to learn first-hand whether federal programs are meeting the needs of those on the front lines -- the police officers, firefighters, rescue teams, and public health agencies,” said Congressman Horn. **“September 11th was a wake-up call for all Americans. We must be prepared for the unexpected.”**

“Firemen, law enforcement personnel, health care workers, and many others are on the front lines in the event of a terrorist attack— the federal government must act to ensure that they are adequately equipped and trained to handle any such crisis,” said Honda. **“Making sure that the federal government maintains an active dialogue with our ‘first responders,’ and understands the considerable financial strain that they are under, must remain is an essential part in the creation of any comprehensive Homeland Defense policy.”**

Honda, who serves as a Vice Chair of the Democratic Task Force on Homeland Security, joined with Rep. Robert Menendez (D-NJ) this past December to introduce the United States Security Act of 2001 (*USA Act*). The bill is a sweeping counter-terrorism measure that calls for \$24 billion in spending to provide state and local government with the latest in equipment and training to protect our nation’s critical infrastructure. The *USA Act* seeks to prepare America's public health infrastructure for new threats and secure all modes of transportation and the national transportation infrastructure.

The measure would also protect America's critical physical and information infrastructure, including nuclear facilities, oil refineries, chemical manufacturing plants, electrical power grids and information systems. The bill also seeks to enhance the capabilities of law enforcement agencies to fight terrorism by improving intergovernmental and interagency coordination and information sharing among federal, state and local authorities.

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“Taking a bottom-up approach and working directly with the brave men and women who protect our communities each day is not only good policy—it’s a matter of national security,” added Honda. **“Congress has yet to pass comprehensive homeland security legislation. I am hopeful that information we have obtained as a result of today’s hearing will send a strong message to the leaders in Washington that we must work together to pass a strong, comprehensive bill to bolster the ability of state and local governments to respond to a crisis.”**

Witnesses at today’s hearing include: Larry A. Mefford, Associate Special Agent in Charge, San Francisco Field Office, Federal Bureau of Investigation; Dr. Steven Bice, Director, National Pharmaceutical Stockpile Center for Disease Control and Prevention; Ronald Castleman, Regional Director, Region 6, Federal Emergency Management Agency; Patricia Dalton, Director, Strategic Issues, U.S. General Accounting Agency; George Vincent, Special Advisor to the Governor on State Security; Diana Bonta, Director, California Department of Health Services; Ray Riordan, Emergency Preparedness Officer, East Bay Municipal Utility District, Oakland, California; Ronald W. Cochran, Laboratory Executive Director, Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory; Dr. Frances Winslow, Director of Emergency Services, City of San Jose; Lucien G Canton, Director, Mayor’s Office of Emergency Services, City of San Francisco; Representatives from the S.F. Police and Fire Departments; Dr. John Brown, Attending Physician, San Francisco General Hospital, Medical Director, San Francisco Emergency Management Services.

To obtain the official testimony given by these witnesses please contact Bonnie Heald or Ernest Baynard at the numbers listed above.